



EXISTING CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES



The last two chapters of the Downtown Plan addressed changes in the population of Council Bluffs and the surrounding service areas, and then focused on the attitudes and hopes of Council Bluffs' residents and stakeholders for their city center. This section examines existing conditions and opportunities in Downtown Council Bluffs. It provides a basis for thinking about future roles and development of different parts of the district.

THE STRUCTURE OF DOWNTOWN

To most people and for much of the twentieth century, "Downtown Council Bluffs" meant the intense traditional retail district along West Broadway between 1st and 6th Streets. The street life, heavy pedestrian traffic, and streetcar transportation now remembered only in historic photographs remain as evidence of a vital urban district second only to Downtown Omaha as a major retail center. Downtown Council Bluffs was served by a variety of locally-owned and now legendary retailers, such as Beno's and the People's Store. This retail district grew around the Main and Broadway intersection at the confluence of major roads that flowed together following the topographic patterns of the land. Land use patterns changed away from this core. To the south, smaller-scale development occurred along Main and Pearl Streets, toward the Haymarket district. Bayliss Park became

the city square, surrounded by civic uses and grand residences, while the seat of city and county government developed near the park, off the main retail core.

The quality and cohesiveness of this district was affected by the economic and consumer changes of the postwar era. The late 1960s saw the beginning of decline of Downtown's traditional retailers, as suburban shopping malls and large stores took advantage of the increased mobility offered to consumers by the growth of auto transportation and the interstate highway system. During the early 1970s, Council Bluffs implemented a bold action to preserve the retail role of Downtown, creating an urban renewal district to bring about the construction of a contemporary auto-oriented regional mall and a new office building in a downtown setting. This project, Midlands Mall, was developed on the site of older commercial buildings between 2nd and Main Streets, from Broadway to Washington Street, and included a public parking garage. The Mall was an initial success, opening to rave reviews for its well-detailed and innovative architecture and its four department stores. However, the project vastly changed the scale and character of Downtown, replacing "Main Street" buildings with the much larger, windowless façade of a regional mall. Ultimately, changing markets, continued retail leakage and, ultimately, the

development of Mall of the Bluffs at the Madison Avenue interchange, eliminated the Mall as a major retail center.

Other redevelopment efforts and land use changes also affected the nature of the Broadway commercial core. During the 1970s, the old Ogden Hotel, between Glen and Park Avenues on the south side of Broadway, was replaced by Ogden Plaza, a contemporary strip center. In 1980, a major community effort to develop contemporary office space resulted in the construction of a new office building for the Redlands Insurance Company at 6th and Broadway. In the meantime, declining occupancy and building deterioration resulted in the demolition of several buildings on the north side of Broadway west of the Mall project. Perhaps the most controversial of these was the demolition of the historic Beno-Wickham Building. As a result of these changes, the Broadway corridor bears little resemblance to the traditional central business district depicted in historic photographs.

Partially as a result of these changes, the current study area is less a traditional downtown, featuring a tight pattern of high-density development, than a large central district with several diverse sub-districts. The linear Broadway corridor, which incorporated the traditional retail core, extends generally along Indian Creek, and developed at the confluence of drainageways and passes in the bluffs that extended down along North Broadway and East Broadway (Highway 6). Steep hills and bluffs of the Loess Hills formation surround the Indian Creek basin north of Kaneshville Boulevard, south of Pierce Street, and east of 4th Street, giving the district a unique design quality and surrounding it with hillside urban residential neighborhoods. These hillsides accommodate some of the city's historic neighborhoods.

Indian Creek drained this downtown valley, most of which is still located in a designated 100-year floodplain. The creek flows down from the north in an open drainageway parallel to North Broadway, and cuts to the west at the base of the Mercy Hospital property. It then continues west in a deep channel, for the most part covered by a concrete creek top between Pierce Street and 2nd Street, before continuing in a culvert under the Omni Business Center (formerly Midlands Mall) parking garage. The channel continues east, covered by parking lots, streets, or a concrete creek top close to Broadway,



and turns south, reemerging as an open channel. The city's many railroads generally followed the base of the bluffs, the south creek channel, and a route through the Missouri River valley from Omaha, as a result staying west and south of the downtown study area.

The size and street pattern of this central urban district also helps to identify several distinct sub-districts. These sub-districts in the central district tend to flow together and don't have clear lines of demarcation, but nevertheless have distinct identities. These definable areas include:

- City Center**, the traditional downtown retail core along West Broadway from 2nd to 8th Streets. This area, extending north to Kaneshville includes Omni Business Center, between 2nd and Main on the north side of West Broadway. This project, the original Midlands Mall project, included two office buildings (25 and 35 Main), that remain in multi-tenant office use. The balance of the Mall has been converted to office use. The south side of Broadway includes a variety of office, retail, and residential uses. Major features include the Ogden Place, a multi-tenant commercial strip center; free-standing offices and major bank buildings; the Bennett Building, Downtown's tallest structure, now converted to housing; and the former Redlands (now Heartland Properties) Building. Many of the buildings in the traditional retail core north of Broadway and west of Main have been demolished. Current uses include the administrative offices of Council Bluffs Community Schools; the Chamber of Commerce office in a converted restaurant; public parking; and some



isolated commercial uses. This area, once Downtown's prime location, includes strategic but underutilized property and should be a major focus for future development.

- **The 100 Block.** This area, generally extending from Pierce to Kaneshville and from 1st to 2nd, includes the last block of Downtown's traditional "Main Street" buildings on the north side of Broadway. This historic block, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002, includes retail, service, and hospitality businesses. The Vine Street block north of Broadway includes both single-family and multi-family residential uses. On the south side of the 100 Block, commercial buildings include appliance, home improvement, and retail businesses, with several underutilized buildings. Two-story buildings on this block have grade-level access from both Broadway and Pierce Street.
- **The East Corridor,** an automobile-oriented, primarily commercial corridor, between 1st Street and Frank Street, from Pierce to Kaneshville. This district is bookended by the landmark Broadway Methodist Church on the west and the Mercy and Jenny Edmundson Hospital campuses on the east. Most of the area's buildings are free-standing structures with their own parking, and include fast-food, office, and service businesses. Major new establishments on the south side of the street include the H. Lee Gendler Center of Family Services; and a Walgreens store. The Kaneshville frontage includes both private and public offices, both using a portion of the Indian Creek creektop for parking. The segment also

includes the reconstructed Kaneshville Tabernacle, developed as an interpretive center by the Mormon Church.

- **Bayliss Park,** including the historic city square and adjacent civic and commercial uses. The blockfaces around the square blend naturally into surrounding subareas, each with a somewhat different character. Despite differences, however, these surrounding blocks feature historic buildings, and a sense of scale and gentility that marks the square as one of the metropolitan area's most attractive urban environments. The north side includes the Smith-Davis Building, a mid-rise office building, and First Baptist Church, while the east edge includes the modernized façade of the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* buildings, along with smaller scale, traditional downtown structures. The Council Bluffs Public Library is off the square, but immediately east of the *Nonpareil* block. The south face of the square includes the new Union Pacific Railroad Museum in the historic Carnegie Library, while the west block includes major churches, along with some office and civic uses.
- **The Government Center,** immediately south of Bayliss Park and including the city's two major operating centers, City Hall and the Community Building/Fire Station, as well as the Pottawattamie County complex south to 6th Avenue.
- **Haymarket,** an historic district of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings along the Main and Pearl corridors south to 9th Avenue. Haymarket, once envisioned as a potential specialty retailing and entertainment district analogous to Omaha's Old Market, instead is dominated by office uses, clustering near the Government Center. Haymarket also includes some commercial and residential uses, as well as the Council Bluffs Senior Center.

In addition to these sub-areas in the central district, the overall study area also includes three surrounding settings:

- **Bluff Street,** a residential district at the foot of the bluff rising above 4th Street. Fourth Street is a mixed use corridor, with a preponderance of residential uses but also including limited

commercial, office, and civic organization development. Bluff Street, parallel to and one block east and up the hill from 4th Street, is primarily a residential environment that includes several restored historic houses. It includes the former Kirn Junior High building, now used as a gym and public facility. Housing in the district ranges from superb restorations to deteriorating high-density properties.

- **The West Residential Neighborhood**, including the block between 7th and 8th between 1st and 9th Avenues. In common with Bluff Street, this primarily residential district includes a range of housing types and conditions. These range from superbly restored Victorian mansions along 8th Street, more modest but well-maintained homes on the south part of the district, and relatively distressed apartments and multi-family conversions on the north side of the area.
- **The Kaneshville North area**, including a mix of residential and institutional uses north of Broadway and east of 8th Street. Some of this area's housing is seriously distressed and past city policies have called for its eventual redevelopment. Some properties have been acquired by First Christian Church, anticipating future expansion. However, the church has decided to relocate to eastern Council Bluffs and has listed these properties for sale.

LAND AND BUILDING USE

Table 3.1 summarizes building use in the Downtown Council Bluffs study area. The study area includes over 3.1 million square feet, the building area of two large regional shopping centers. About 56% of all building space is located on street level; of this, less than 4% is currently vacant. This vacancy rate, calculated in 2002, could rise substantially with recent business developments. This vacancy rate is relatively low for Downtown districts, and partially results from the city's demolition of a substantial number of vacant structures. Vacancy is somewhat higher for upper building levels, but remains below 10% of non-residential space. These vacancy rates are approximate, and do not include a detailed survey of upper level occupancy in existing office buildings.

Downtown Council Bluffs is clearly dominated by office and civic uses, which together account for about 54% of the floor area inventory. Downtown Council Bluffs includes almost 900,000 square feet of non-governmental office space, making it a significant office cluster for the metropolitan area. Government and civic uses (including churches) account for another 810,000 square feet.

On the other hand, retail uses account for a relatively small proportion of the district's building area, with about 144,000 square feet. Consumer uses, including retailing, hospitality, automotive, and personal service uses, account for 377,915 square feet, still a substantial presence.

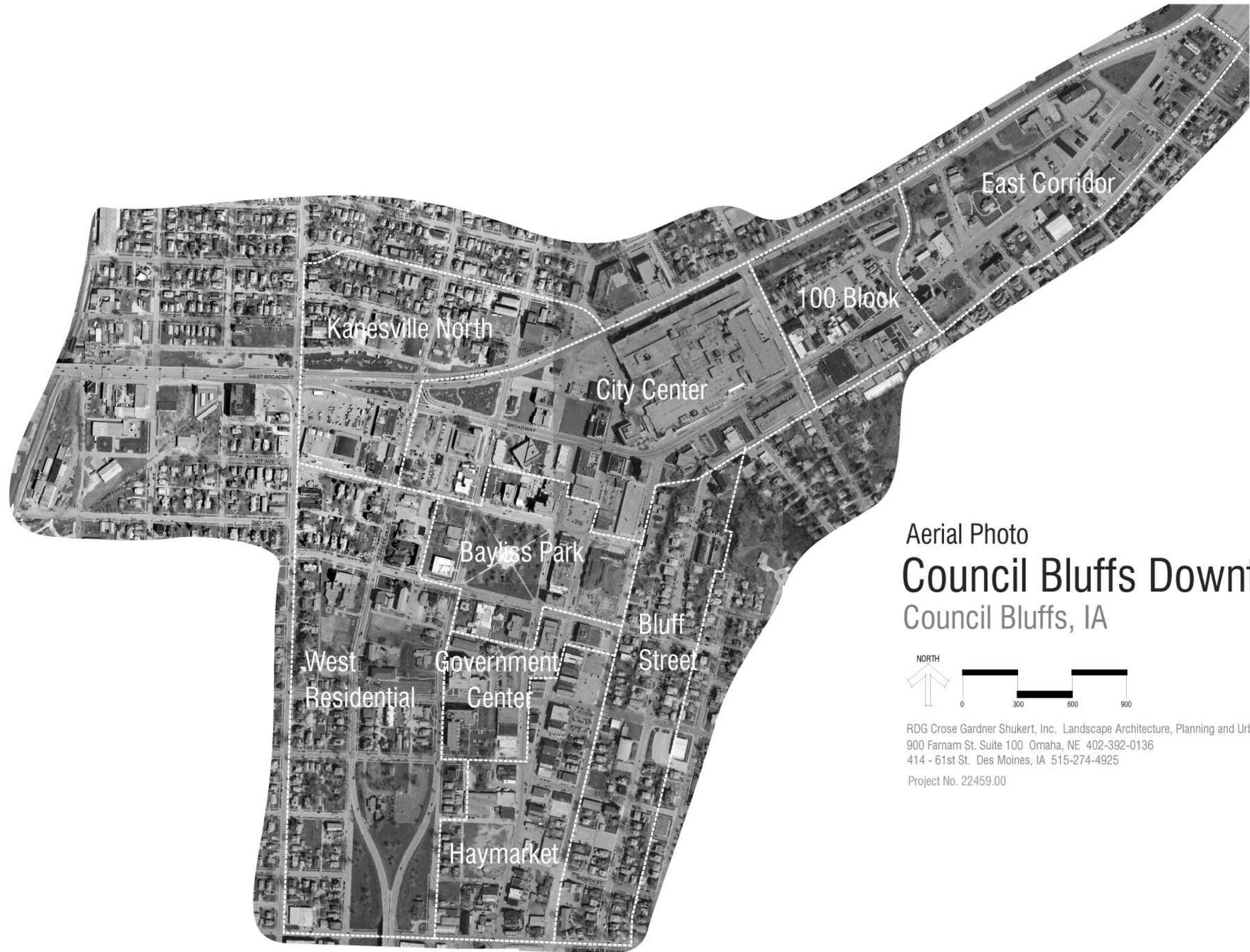
The Downtown Land Use Maps indicate the geographic distribution of these uses in the district:

- **Retail and personal service uses** are most prevalent in the 100 Block and East Corridor sub-areas, with a scattering of establishments in other sub-areas, including Haymarket and the West Broadway core. Significant retailing is also present at the 8th and Broadway intersection.
- **Office uses** remain strongest in the West Broadway core, with Omni Business center, the 25 and 35 Main Buildings, the US Bank Building, and the Heartland Properties (former Redlands Insurance) Building supplying much of the district's office space. Haymarket has also emerged as a significant office center, with a variety of smaller-scale facilities that relate to the adjacent Government Center. Council Bluffs' two

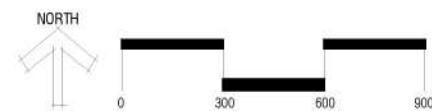
Table 3.1: Building Use in Downtown Council Bluffs, 2002

Building Use	Street Level	Upper Levels	Total
Office	654,235	239,610	893,845
Retail	143,716	0	143,716
Services	111,041	13,875	124,915
Hospitality	70,204	5,488	75,692
Automotive	33,592	0	33,592
Wholesaling	23,430	46,859	70,289
Industrial/Warehousing	49,403	67,153	116,556
Education	66,555	62,720	129,275
Government, Civic	409,082	401,785	810,867
Residential*	137,263	473,950	611,213
Vacant/Storage	55,905	83,869	139,775
Total	1,754,426	1,395,309	3,149,735

* Excludes single-family residential



Aerial Photo
Council Bluffs Downtown
Council Bluffs, IA



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design
900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136
414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925
Project No. 22459.00

hospitals, just beyond the study area's boundaries, also generate some office and retail uses in the East Corridor sub-area.

- **Civic and public uses** are dominant in the Bayliss Park and Government Center sub-areas, strongly defining the character of the district between the Broadway "core" and Haymarket.
- **Industrial uses**, including warehousing and distribution, are scattered around the southern edge of the Downtown district. Major industrial development is concentrated south of 9th Avenue.

Three-dimensional land use maps illustrate the distribution of upper level utilization, displaying the relatively strong existing occupancy on upper levels. Areas of upper level vacancy include the historic 100 Block of West Broadway; and some buildings in Haymarket. Haymarket's occupancy in general degrades in the south edge of the district. These vacant areas are generally manageable in scale and are located in National Register districts. As such, they provide potential resources for building reuse, including residential and office uses. The demands for these uses are considered in more detail in the market analysis section of this plan.

BUILDING ASSESSMENT

The Building Assessment Map displays a general exterior assessment of building conditions in the study area. Most of Downtown Council Bluffs' buildings were developed to high initial standards, preserving them in good structural condition. Buildings are grouped into the following condition categories:

- **Excellent**, including contemporary or recently rehabilitated or restored structures. Areas with the highest percentage of buildings in excellent condition include the office segments of the West Broadway core; the Government Center; Bayliss Park, and newer structures along the East Corridor. The unusual historic nature of the central district has also encouraged significant rehabilitation and restoration activity, especially along 8th Street, Bluff Street, and in the Haymarket district. Recent National Register listing and an increased sense of district awareness also appears to be encouraging reinvestment in the 100 Block.
- **Minor maintenance**, including buildings generally in very sound condition that require continuing ongoing maintenance. These buildings are found in all parts of Downtown. Some more contemporary commercial structures along the



Photo by George Miles, Aerial

East Corridor are beginning to display some need for rehabilitation.

- **Significant maintenance**, including basically sound buildings that nevertheless require substantial rehabilitation. These are most prevalent along the 100 Block, in some parts of Haymarket, and in the residential districts that surround the Downtown business center.
- **Deteriorated**, including buildings in relatively unsound condition for which rehabilitation may not be economically feasible. The southern portions of Haymarket, generally along South Main south of Worth Street and 8th Avenue, display some of Downtown's worst building conditions. The 100 Block, most notably the south side, and the Vine Street block between 1st and 2nd Streets, also include buildings in relatively poor condition. Surrounding residential areas also display a significant number of houses in poor or deteriorating condition, with the highest incidence occurring in the Mynster Street area.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

This analysis relates building occupancy to historic significance in order to identify potential opportunities for redevelopment or adaptive reuse. Council Bluffs provides an excellent inventory of late 19th and early 20th century commercial, civic, and residential architecture. These structures range from the small-scale "Main Street" commercial buildings of Haymarket and the 100 Block, to the great Victorian urban mansions of 8th Street and Bluff Street, and the fine high-style civic buildings surrounding Bayliss Park. Council Bluffs' residents and downtown stakeholders clearly value this heritage, and historic preservation remains a particularly important community value. Therefore, a particular emphasis should be placed on activities that can preserve these unusual resources and, when necessary, restore them to productive use. Tax incentives, such as Historic Tax Credits, encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

The Opportunity Analysis categorizes buildings by quality of building utilization. Utilization categories include:

- **Full Multi-Story Use**, including buildings whose upper levels are in permanent, non-storage uses.

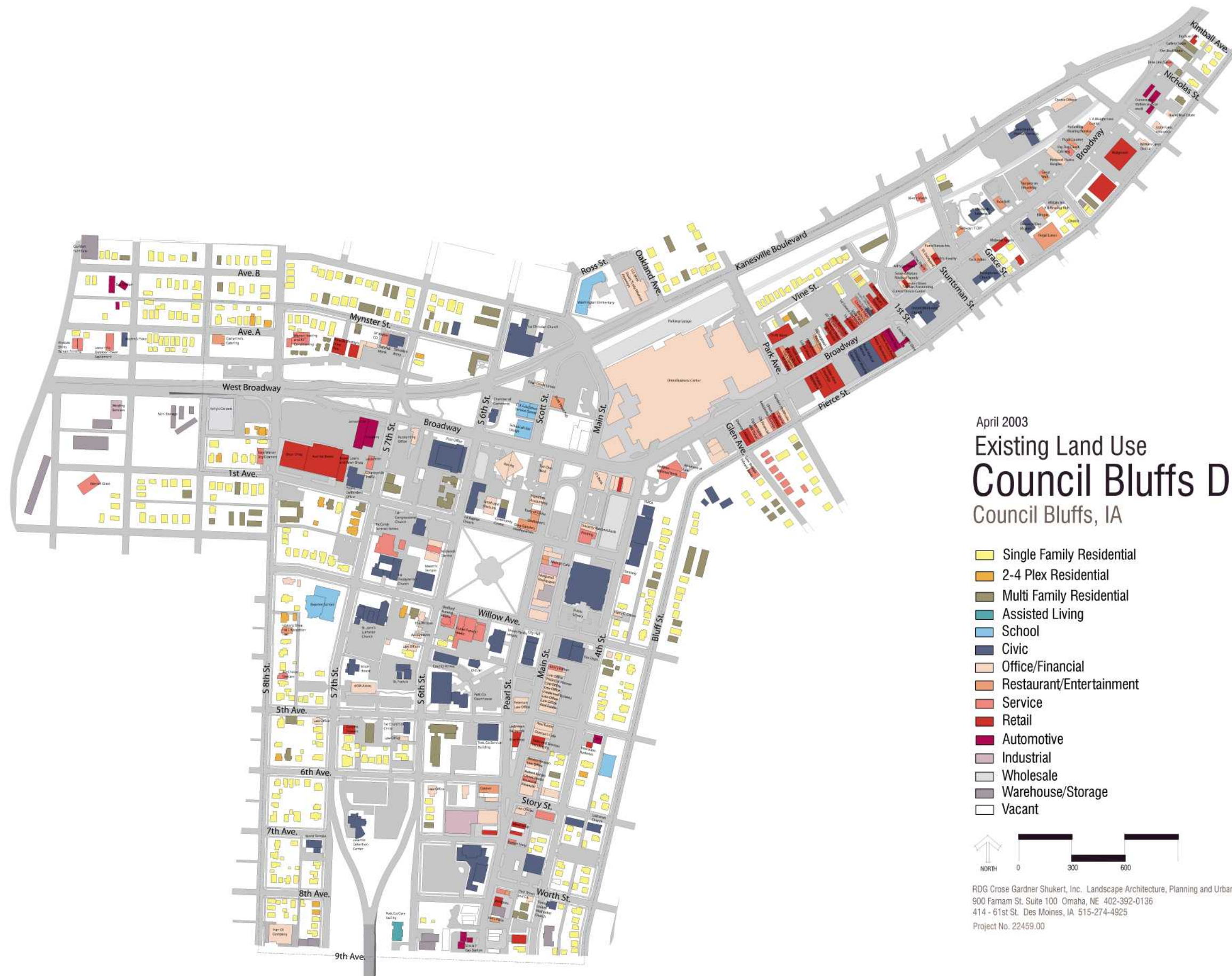


Office buildings with available upper-level space are included in this category if all levels are improved and at least partially leased.

- **Multi-Story Use with at least one upper-level in use.** Buildings in this category have at least one full floor that is vacant. Examples are three-story buildings with one story occupied, while the remaining level is clearly vacant.
- **Multi-Story Buildings with no upper-level use.** This category includes buildings that are used on the street level but have no use of upper levels.
- **Vacant Multi-Story Buildings**, including buildings with street level as well as upper-level vacancy.
- **Single-story occupied and vacant buildings.**

Historic assessment categories include:

- **Landmarks.** These are buildings judged to be of essential historic significance and are either listed or eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This category includes the Haymarket and 100 Block National Register Districts; the historic Pottawattamie County (squirrel cage) Jail; the Carnegie Library (now the Union Pacific Railroad Museum); the former Kirn Junior High gymnasium; the former YMCA; and a number of historic homes.
- **Strongly Contributing Buildings.** These individual structures contribute to the character or fabric of potential National Register districts. Some may also be determined eligible for individual listing.



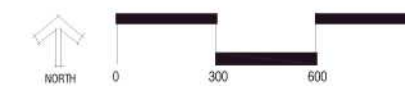
April 2003

Existing Land Use

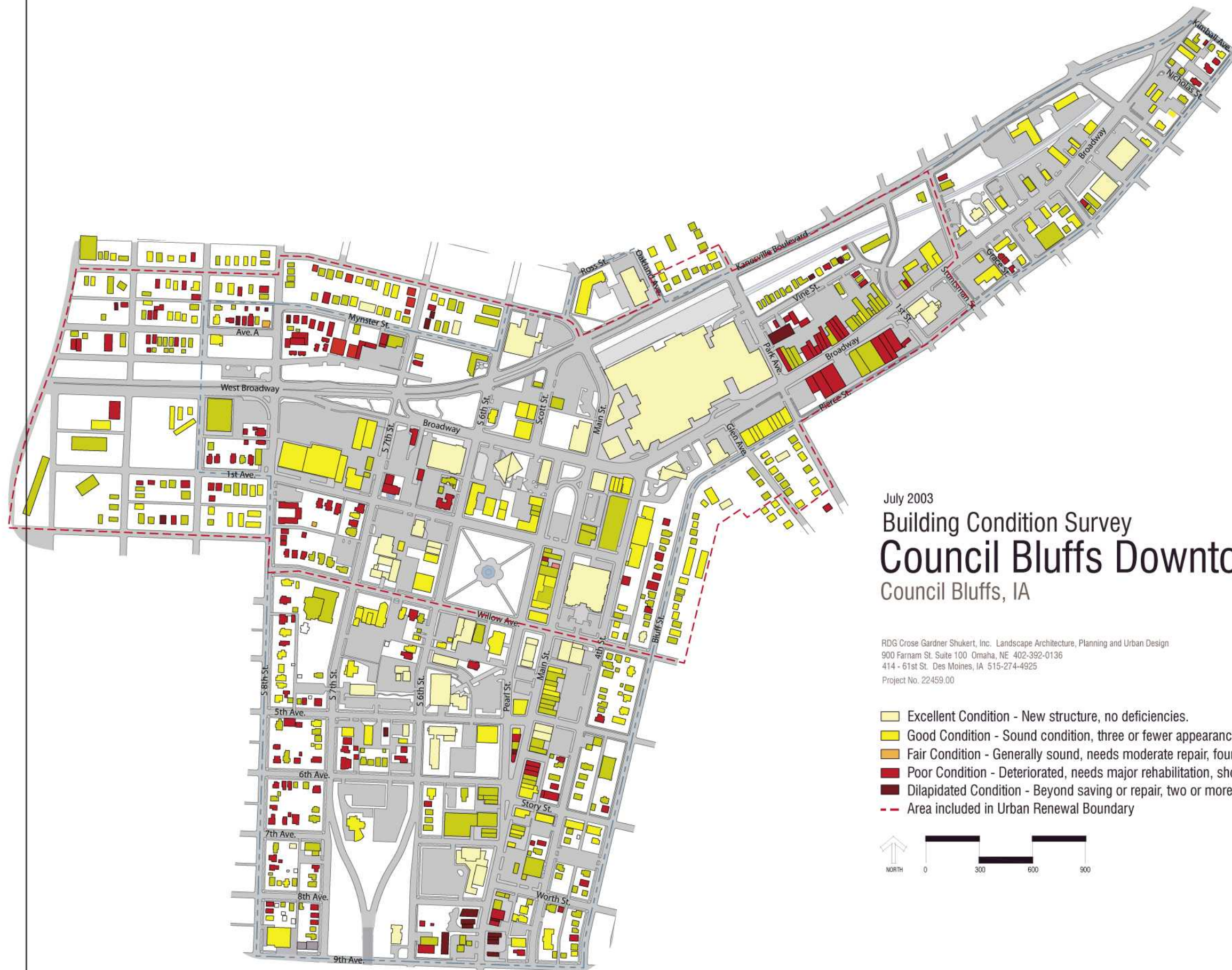
Council Bluffs Downtown

Council Bluffs, IA

- Single Family Residential
- 2-4 Plex Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Assisted Living
- School
- Civic
- Office/Financial
- Restaurant/Entertainment
- Service
- Retail
- Automotive
- Industrial
- Wholesale
- Warehouse/Storage
- Vacant



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design
 900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136
 414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925
 Project No. 22459.00



July 2003

Building Condition Survey

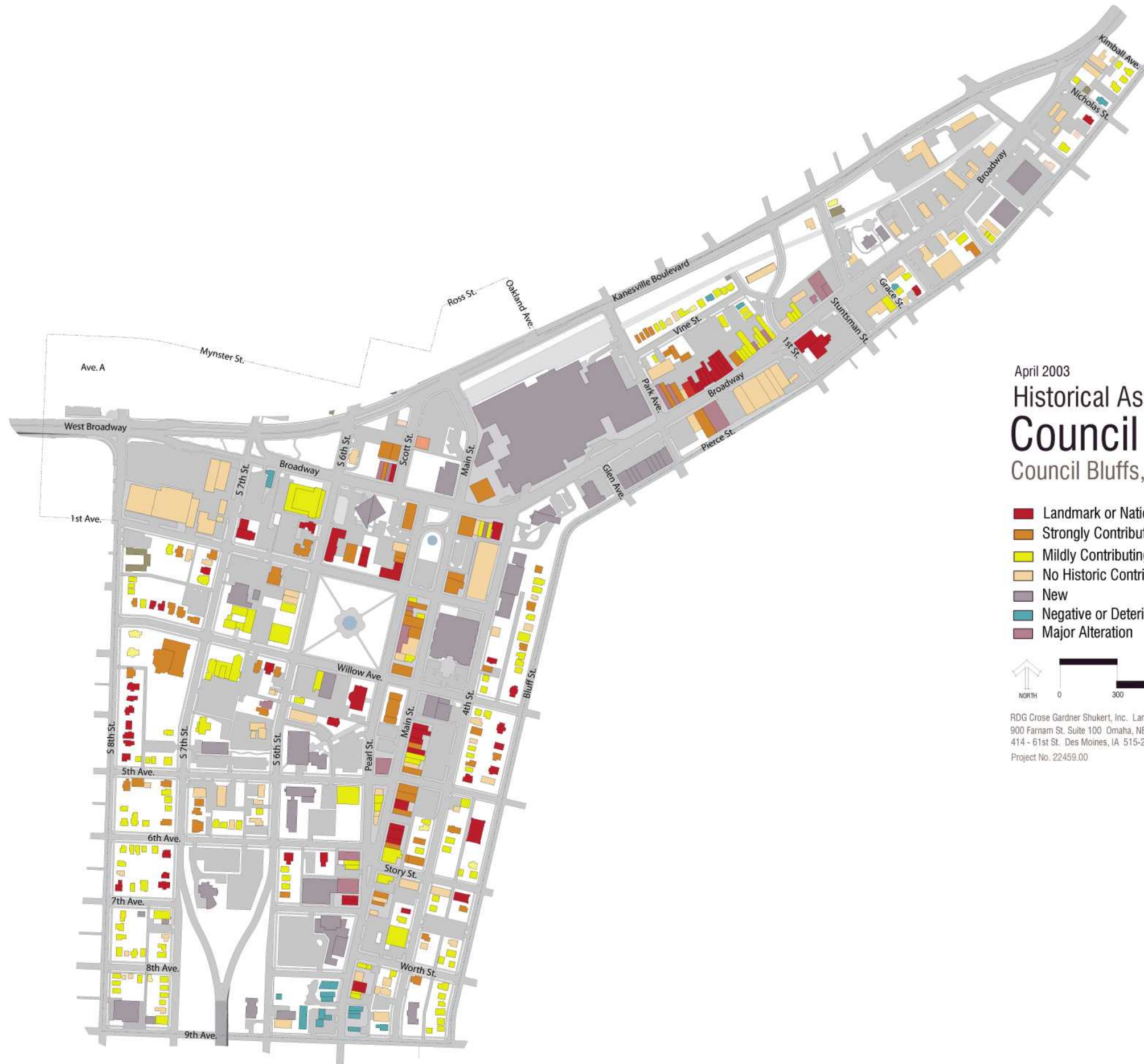
Council Bluffs Downtown

Council Bluffs, IA

RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design
 900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136
 414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925
 Project No. 22459.00

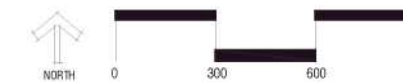
- Excellent Condition - New structure, no deficiencies.
- Good Condition - Sound condition, three or fewer appearance deficiencies.
- Fair Condition - Generally sound, needs moderate repair, four or more appearance deficiencies.
- Poor Condition - Deteriorated, needs major rehabilitation, shows signs of structural failure.
- Dilapidated Condition - Beyond saving or repair, two or more structural failures.
- Area included in Urban Renewal Boundary





April 2003
Historical Assessment
Council Bluffs Downtown
Council Bluffs, IA

- Landmark or National Register Eligible
- Strongly Contributing to Historic Character
- Mildly Contributing to Historic Character
- No Historic Contribution
- New
- Negative or Deteriorating Condition
- Major Alteration



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design
900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136
414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925
Project No. 22459.00



- **Background Contributing.** These buildings were typically built before World War II and represent examples of vernacular commercial architecture. While not individually eligible for Register listing, they generally contribute to the character of their overall context.
- **Significant New Buildings.** These are relatively contemporary buildings that represent substantial capital investments. Examples include recent bank and office construction, Omni Business Center, 25 and 35 Main, the Council Bluffs Public Library, and others.
- **Not Contributing.** These are structures that do not contribute to the structure or fabric of a significant historic or design district.
- **Negative.** These are typically structures that detract from the fabric of a district because of deteriorating condition or appearance.
- **Major Modification.** These represent structures that have undergone major modifications and, as a result, do not contribute to the integrity of the district. Some of these buildings have been modified with a screen or façade treatment that may be reversible.

The Opportunity Analysis relates the economics of building utilization and historic assessment to define potential targets for adaptive reuse. It places buildings in the following groups:

- **Category 1**, representing the highest priority potential opportunities for adaptive

redevelopment. This category includes buildings that rank as landmarks or are strongly contributing that are vacant on upper-levels or are warehouses in low use. These buildings represent major historic resources that may be threatened economically by low use.

- **Category 2** represents buildings equal to Category 1 in significance, but which enjoy some level of upper level use. While high in priority, these buildings may not face the same economic threat as Category 1 structures.
- **Category 3**, including background contributing buildings with upper level vacancy. Loss of these buildings would result in gaps on streets.
- **Category 4**, including background contributing buildings with at least some upper-level occupancy. Again, these buildings may not face the economic pressures experienced by category 3 structures.
- **Category 5**, including structures with substantial vacancy that are either non-contributing, negative, or have experienced major modification. A project that restores a historic building to original appearance should be placed in Categories 1 or 2.

This ranking of priorities can help the city identify potential reuse targets or consider competing projects. The actual market for rehabilitation is considered in detail in market analysis section of this plan. In general, candidates for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse are concentrated in the Haymarket District and the north side of the 100 Block. Several other good opportunities for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse are found in the 7th and 8th Street residential corridors, and include such major structures as the former YMCA.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a critical system in Downtown Council Bluffs and influences several major development issues in the central district. Downtown is at the junction of the city's different ecologies – its Westside flatland neighborhoods and the bluff environments to the north and east, and is at the confluence of several natural traffic flow corridors. As

such, it functions as both a major conduit for the city's dominant east-west traffic movements, and as a crossroads with its secondary north-south movement patterns.

Downtown has three parallel east-west corridors that in one way or another provide arterial transportation functions. These include:

- Broadway.** Broadway, once designated as US Highway 6 through Downtown, is the city's principal east-west arterial, extending from the US 6 and Interstate 80 interchange about three miles east of Downtown to the US 6/I-480 bridge over the Missouri River into Omaha. Broadway, of course, is also Downtown's traditional main street. After the completion of the Kaneshville Boulevard bypass, Broadway's role as a through traffic carrier changed substantially. East of 1st Street, it maintains a four-lane undivided section, with average daily traffic (ADT) in the range of 7,000 to 8,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Through the 100 Block between 1st and 2nd Streets, the street converts to two through lanes with diagonal parking on the north side of the street. Through this segment, the street carries an ADT of between 10,000 and 11,000 vpd. West of 2nd Street, Broadway reverts to a four-lane section, with left-turn lanes at major intersections. ADT is about 11,000 vpd between 2nd and Main Streets, and drops to about 9,000 vpd west to its junction with Kaneshville Boulevard.
- Kaneshville Boulevard.** Kaneshville is a four-lane divided facility, designed as a bypass for through traffic around the central district. The bypass diverges from Broadway at the eastern edge of the study area, just east of Frank Street, and rejoins Broadway at the complex 8th Street intersection. Kaneshville satisfactorily fills its bypass role, although signal placement and timing designed to create breaks in traffic to permit exiting from adjacent neighborhoods somewhat slows through traffic flow. Kaneshville displays an ADT ranging from 17,000 to 22,000 vpd between Frank and 1st Streets; 25,000 vpd between 1st and 2nd; and 23,000 to 25,000 vpd between 2nd and the junction with Broadway.
- Pierce Street.** Pierce is a primarily two-lane facility, designed as a collector street, intersecting

Broadway at the North Broadway intersection east of Mercy Hospital. It continues parallel to Broadway, one short block to the south of the major corridor. Pierce Street's relatively free traffic flow and access to residential neighborhoods to the south causes it to act as a distributor for these neighborhoods and, to some degree, a "south bypass" for traffic bound for industrial areas south of the central district. Aligned along the foot of a bluff, Pierce gradually climbs to St. Peter's Church, and turns southward into Bluff Street, descending from that high point. The "bypass" role of the Pierce/Bluff system creates significant traffic conflicts along the heavily residential Bluff Street corridor. Pierce Street displays an ADT of about 8,000 vpd between Ridge Avenue and 1st Street, and about 7,000 vpd west of 1st Street. Bluff Street, south of the St. Peters turn, experiences an ADT of about 7,600 adt. This is well within the capacity of this wide two-lane street, but creates a free-flow pattern that increases traffic speed.

While east-west traffic movement dominates the Downtown district, several important north-south cross movements also occur. These include:

- The Harrison/First Street system.** Harrison is a two-lane collector north of Kaneshville Boulevard that extends north into the bluff neighborhoods bordering Downtown and eventually leads to North Broadway (Highway 183). It carries volumes in the range of 5,500 vpd. South of Kaneshville, Harrison becomes 1st Street, continuing south as a system that includes Madison Avenue and leads to an interchange with Interstate 80. Mall of the Bluffs and other major commercial development occurs at the Madison



Avenue interchange, about two miles southeast of Downtown. South 1st Street carries about 10,000-11,000 vpd between Downtown and Graham Street, with flows gradually increasing toward the Mall and interchange.

- **The Main and Pearl one-way pair.** These streets represent the major north-south routes through the “stem” of Downtown, linking Haymarket and industrial areas to the south with the Broadway and Kanesville corridors. Main is a two-way street between Kanesville and Broadway adjacent to Omni Business Center, and carries about 5,000 vpd. North of Kanesville, Main Street connects with Washington Avenue. South of Broadway, Main divides at Fountain Square, with Pearl providing southbound movement and Main serving northbound traffic. The two streets rejoin at Haymarket Square. Each of these streets has an ADT in the range of 4,000-5,000 vpd. Between Broadway and 9th Avenue, major cross-movements are controlled by four-way stops.
- **The 6th and 7th Street one-way pairs.** This north-south pair, offering two through lanes in each direction, provide the principal conduit between Downtown and the South Expressway (Iowa Highway 192). The urban environment of these corridors features a mix of government, civic, educational, office, and residential uses. The pair displays a relatively symmetrical traffic flow of about 7,000 vpd on each street. In the future, a new Avenue G viaduct will connect with a continued 6th/7th Street pair north of Kanesville Boulevard, providing a much needed alternative route over the central railroad corridor and improving street continuity between the north side



of the city and Interstate 80 on the south edge. This change will affect traffic flows on 6th and 7th Streets, potentially increasing daily traffic by 50%.

- **8th Street.** Eighth Street, at the edge of the study area, is a north-south minor arterial, extending north to Big Lake Park and Highway 183 (as Mynster Springs Road) and south to 23rd Avenue. Through the Downtown area, its two-lane section carries about 5,000 vpd north of Broadway, about 9,000 vpd between Broadway and 5th Avenue, and about 5,000 vpd south to 9th Avenue.

Downtown Council Bluffs enjoys excellent connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and to the Interstate system. Direct connections to the Interstate include:

- Broadway/Kanesville east to the US 6 Interchange with Interstate 80, also serving Iowa Western Community College.
- Broadway/Kanesville west to the Interstate 480.
- South 1st/Madison southeast to the Madison Avenue Interchange with I-80.
- Access to Interstate 29 north via 16th Street.
- 6th/7th Streets and the South Expressway to Interstate 29/80.

Traffic Issues

All of Downtown Council Bluff's principal corridors have adequate current capacity to meet current traffic demands. However, the system experiences the following functional problems that should be considered in Downtown planning:

- The complicated intersection created at the west side of the central district by the junctions of 7th Street, Kanesville Boulevard, and West Broadway. This intersection now includes a counterflow westbound to southbound movement on Broadway and could create significant southbound stacking problems on 7th Street between Kanesville and Broadway, particularly with the increase of 7th Street traffic north of Kanesville following completion of the Avenue G Viaduct.

- Traffic hazards created along Pierce Street by frequent short street connections between Pierce and Broadway, and poor sight lines created by buildings tight against the south right-of-way line of Pierce. The need for the large number of cross connections should be evaluated; some of these may be incorporated into parking lots for adjacent businesses.
- High traffic volume and fast-moving traffic utilizing the Pierce/Bluff Street system as a route to adjacent neighborhoods, and as a south commercial bypass around both Broadway and Kanesville Boulevard.
- Continuing safety concerns on the part of some stakeholders about diagonal parking on the 100 Block of West Broadway.
- The appropriateness of four-lane undivided sections of Broadway through the central district, and possible replacement by a three-lane section with center left-turn lanes.
- Poor visibility and geometrics at the 1st Avenue and Pierce Street intersection.

Transit Service

Council Bluffs receives bus service through a service agreement with Metro Area Transit. Downtown, historically an important nucleus of public transportation service, remains a significant service node for these local and intercity services. Primary routes serving Downtown Council Bluffs include:

- *The Omaha/Broadway Line (Routes 41, 42, and 45).* This trunk line system terminates at 19th and Farnam in Downtown Omaha and extends along the West Broadway corridor to Downtown Council Bluffs. In Downtown, the trunk line divides into three branches. Route 45 extends along North Broadway to Coit Street at the north corporate limits. Routes 41 and 42 both continue to Mall of the Bluffs by way of different routes – Route 41 utilizes East Pierce, McPherson, and Bennett, while Route 42 utilizes South 1st and Madison Avenue. This system provides service on 15 to 30-minute headways on the Broadway trunk. Route 45 provides peak hour service only, while



frequencies on the Route 41 and 42 branches vary.

- *A Southside Circulator (Route 44),* primarily a loop utilizing 35th Street, 23rd Avenue, 7th Street, and Main Street to 4th and Broadway. This route also serves the Manawa Power Center, and operates on one- to two-hour headways.
- *A Northside Circulator (Route 43),* providing service along segments of Avenue G, 5th Avenue, and Broadway, and terminating at 4th and Broadway. The line also extends north along 16th Street to the North Park shopping center, and also operates on one- to two-hour headways.

Trails

Downtown Council Bluffs is not currently served by multi-purpose trails, but is integrated into the metropolitan area's trail master plan. The plan calls for an eastward connection along Kanesville Boulevard and McPherson Avenue to the existing Valley View Trail, and to a proposed link along Mosquito Creek to Iowa Western Community College. The plan also envisions a western link through the business district and along Creektop to Indian Creek, extending south along the creek channel to the existing Western Historic Trails Center and Lake Manawa Trails. Long-term plans also call for a continued west trail link along the city's central corridor to the Missouri River Pedestrian Bridge. The *CB-21 Plan*, prepared by RDG, and the *West Broadway Corridor Plan*, developed by EDAW, both suggest consideration of the 1st Avenue railroad corridor as a route for a potential spine trail. Bike lanes along east-west through streets may also be an option.



Parking Supply

Downtown Council Bluffs' supply of parking closely matches the demand generated by the existing mix of building uses. Downtown Council Bluffs furnishes about 4,700 parking stalls, about 880 of which are supplied on-street. The Parking Facilities map illustrates the location and nature of this parking supply. The district has several major off-street public parking resources, including:

- The Omni Business Center Parking Structure, along the south side of Kaneshville Boulevard between Main and 2nd Streets. This structure, developed as part of the Midlands Mall urban renewal project, is publicly owned but leased to the Omni Center. It straddles Indian Creek and provides 1,156 total stalls.
- The Fourth Street Garage, located south of Broadway on the west side of 4th Street. This older, privately-owned facility provides 255 stalls on two levels.
- Surface lots between Main and Scott Streets, between Broadway and Kaneshville. These generally underutilized facilities provide about 230 stalls.
- Surface lots between Scott and 6th Streets, between Broadway and Kaneshville, providing 61 stalls.

- The 100 Block lot, serving the north side of the 100 Block of West Broadway. This lot provides about 71 stalls.
- Fourth Street lots, generally serving mixed use buildings in the Haymarket district and providing about 140 surface stalls. These are divided equally between public and private use.

Other parking provides dedicated spaces for both public and private facilities in the area.

Table 3.2 below calculates parking demand for Downtown, based on existing building use. The calculation indicates that overall parking demand and parking supply are in relative balance. The calculations indicate a demand for about 5,926 parking spaces, corresponding to a nominal shortage of about 1,200 spaces. However, because every building in a Downtown does not require full use of each space, and different uses can share parking at different times, we typically apply a 20% demand reduction in Downtown settings. As a result, the adjusted demand is about 4,741 stalls, very close to the supply.

This analysis indicates that Downtown's parking supply generally meets demand. However, parking in some parts of Downtown, particularly in the Government Center area, remains relatively scarce, and new retail uses continue to require convenient parking. From this, we recommend the following parking policies in Downtown:

- Expand the supply of parking available near the county government complex, potentially through a new parking structure that can also serve the Haymarket District. Because of the historic character of the district, the design of a new structure must respect the pedestrian scale and architectural antecedents of the district.
- Develop new parking to support major development initiatives. New developments should provide most of their own parking, rather than continuing to draw from the existing supply.
- Increase parking supply in the 100 Block as a part of new development in that area.

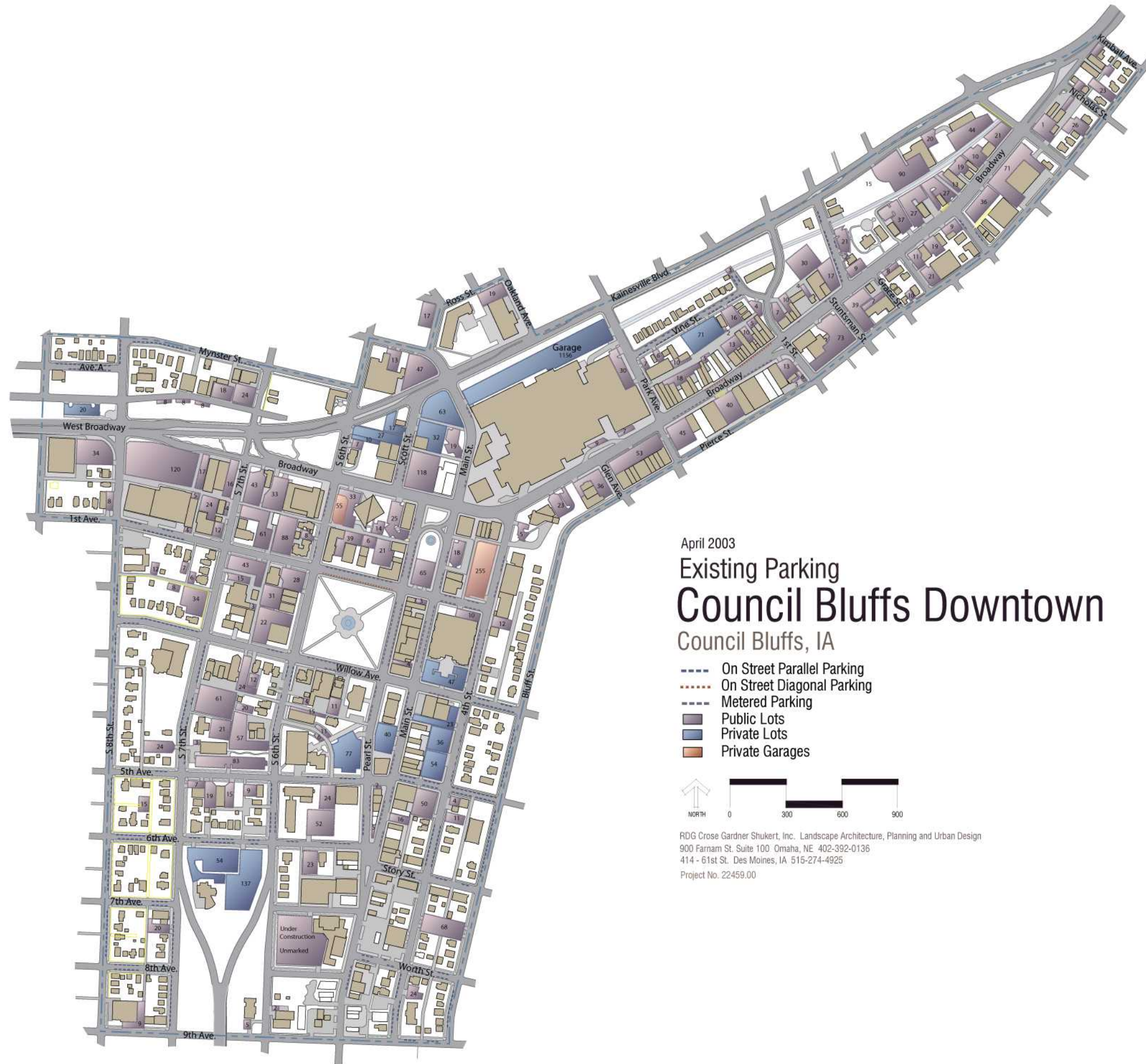
EXISTING CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Table 3.2: Parking Supply and Demand in Downtown

Type of Parking	Supply
Private Off-Street Surface	2,215
Public Off-Street Surface	218
Parking Structures	1,411
On-Street	880
Total	4,724

Use	Floor Area	Parking Ratio Spaces /1,000 SF	Parking Requirement
Office	900,000	3.0	2,700
Retail	150,000	3.0	450
Services	110,000	2.5	275
Hospitality	70,000	3.0	210
Automotive	35,000	3.0	105
Industrial/ Warehousing	50,000	1.0	50
Civic	950,000	2.5	2,375
Multifamily Residential	150,000	1.5	225
Total			6,390
20% Mixed Use Adjustment			1,278
Adjusted Total			5,112





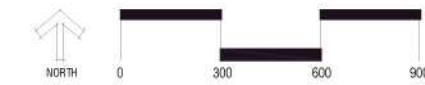
April 2003

Existing Parking

Council Bluffs Downtown

Council Bluffs, IA

- On Street Parallel Parking
- On Street Diagonal Parking
- Metered Parking
- Public Lots
- Private Lots
- Private Garages



RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc. Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design
900 Farnam St. Suite 100 Omaha, NE 402-392-0136
414 - 61st St. Des Moines, IA 515-274-4925
Project No. 22459.00